

Message Text

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AMCONSUL BUKAVU (POUCH)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5479

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MPOL, CU, UR, CG

SUBJECT: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REFS: (A) KINSHASA 4345 (B) KINSHASA 4399 (C) KINSHASA 3806 (D)
MONORIVA 2377 (E) BUJUMBURA 0358 (F) STATE 083987 (G) STATE 134913
(H) KINSHASA 2959

1. SUMMARY: THE GOZ CONTINUES TO VIEW THE SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA AS THREATENING AND DIVISIVE. THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT PERCEIVES SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA AS THE SOURCE OF A PRIMARY THREAT TO ZAIRE. THE 1ST SHABAN WAR REINFORCED THIS PERCEPTION, AND THE 2ND SHABAN WAR HAS MADE THE GOZ'S CONVICTION THAT THERE IS A SOVIET/CUBAN PLOT AGAINST ZAIRE AN ARTICLE OF FAITH. END SUMMARY.

2. THE FOLLOWING APPRAISAL IS KEYED TO POINTS RAISED IN REFTEL G:

3. QUESTION ONE; "HOST GOVERNMENT PERCEPTION":

A. THE GOZ CLEARLY PERCEIVES SOVIET/CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA
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AS A NEGATIVE FORCE IN GENERAL AND ONE THAT THREATENS ZAIRE IN PARTICULAR. THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS HABITUALLY DEPLORE SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA CALLING IT "SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM". IN THIS CONNECTION, ZAIRE CONSIDERS ANGOLA ESSENTIALLY A SOVIET COLONY IN CENTRAL AFRICA. THE 2 SHABA INVASIONS, IN 1977 AND 1978, COMBINED WITH CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN ANGOLA, ETHIOPIA AND TO A LESSER EXTENT THE CONGO, HAVE CONVINCED

THE GOZ THAT THE SOVIET/CUBAN PRESENCE IN AFRICA CONSTITUTES THE PRIMARY THREAT TO ZAIRE. FOR EXAMPLE, MOBUTU HAS STATED REPEATEDLY THAT ZAIRE IS "SURROUNDED BY THE RED OF COMMUNISM" (REFTELS A -G). THE DEPTH OF MOBUTU'S APPREHENSION IS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS REQUEST THAT PRESIDENT TOLBERT OF LIBERIA RAISE THIS ISSUE ON HIS BEHALF WITH PRESIDENT CARTER IN MONROVIA (REFTEL D). NOW THAT THERE HAS BEEN A 2ND SHABA WAR, MOBUTU'S CONCERNS HAVE INTENSIFIED FURTHER. HE HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT SOVIET-BACKED CUBAN MILITARY PERSONNEL PARTICIPATED IN THE ATTACK ON KOLWEZI.

4. QUESTION TWO; "ATTENDANT PROBLEMS":

A. THE GOZ BELIEVES THAT SOVIET/CUBAN AIMS IN AFRICA INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CHAIN OF COMMUNIST NEO COLONIES ACROSS CENTRAL AFRICA. PRESIDENT MOBUTU SEES ZAIRE AS THE SOUGHT-AFTER CENTRAL LINK IN THIS CHAIN. THIS VIEW WAS UNDERSCORED BY THE GOZ'S NERVOUS REACTION TO THE OPENING OF A CUBAN EMBASSY IN BUJUMBURA (REFTELS E AND H). IN MOBUTU'S EYES, THIS SOVIET/CUBAN STRATEGY HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL, ALMOST SURROUNDING ZAIRE WITH SOVIET/ CUBAN CLIENT STATES (ANGOLA, CONGO AND TANZANIA). MOREOVER, SINCE THE ATTACK ROUTE FOR THE 2ND SHABAN INVASION WAS THROUGH ZAMBIA, MOBUTU PROBABLY CONSIDERS THAT SOUTHERN NEIGHBOR, IF NOT IN THE CLIENT STATE CATEGORY, ESSENTIALLY DEFENSELESS AGAINST SOVIET/ CUBAN STRATEGY.

5. QUESTION THREE; "PRESCRIPTION FOR HANDLING PROBLEMS":
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GOZ HAS ATTEMPTED TO COUNTER THE SOVIET/CUBAN "ALLIANCE" IN TWO WAYS. FIRST, GOZ HAS SUPPORTED COUNTER FORCES TO PRO-SOVIET/CUBAN GOVERNMENTS, E.G.: AID TO THE ANTI-M.P.L.A. GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS. SECONDLY, GOZ HAS ENCOURAGED FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS (US, FRANCE AND BELGIUM) TO EQUIP AND TRAIN THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES AND TO PROVIDE INCREASING AMOUNTS OF ECONOMIC AID. MOBUTU RESTATED THIS GOZ APPROACH TO TREASURY ASST SECRETARY BERGSTEN DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO ZAIRE. IN THE WAKE OF THE 2ND SHABA WAR AND THE FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT IN PARIS, WE CAN EXPECT MOBUTU TO SEEK EVEN GREATER ASSISTANCE AGAINST THE SOVIET/CUBAN COALITION.

6. QUESTION FOUR; "SOVIET/CUBAN ROLE AS A DIVISIVE FORCE IN AFRICA"
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GOZ REPEATEDLY HAS COMPLAINED TO THE USG THAT "MODERATE STATES" IN AFRICA HAVE LOST CONFIDENCE IN US ABILITY OR INCLINATION TO PROTECT ITS FRIENDS AGAINST THE SOVIET/CUBAN THREAT (REFTELS A, B, C). THIS UNDERSCORES GOZ BELIEF THAT AFRICA IS ALREADY DIVIDED INTO PRO- AND ANTI SOVIET/CUBAN BLOCS.
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